

wielded it, to wreak upon these dependents that vengeance which they could no longer personally exercise.

The next and more important error was, that our plan of emancipation, as M. Tocqueville too truly observed, seemed to have been framed with a view to the interests of colonial wealth alone, and to secure as little interruption of labour as possible. For this purpose, the negro was simply converted from the slave of the master into his apprentice, instead of the relations which bound the one to the other being entirely broken asunder, and subordination to a new authority introduced. The master could no longer sell his slave; he could no longer punish him, but was forced to recur to justice for that purpose; but the apprentice was, as before, his compelled labourer, only the compulsion was administered from another quarter.

Under these restrictions, the period of apprenticeship, in almost all our colonies, was one of mutual discontent, suspicion, and aversion; the worst of all possible preparations for that condition of absolute freedom which was to follow.

The former of these steps, even M. Tocqueville, I am surprised to find, does not propose to avoid. He recommends to his government a plan of apprenticeship for a definite period, similar in this respect to the British measure. But in some of its features it differs essentially from our own. The apprentices are to be transferred at once from the power of the masters to the control of the state. All property in their labour is to cease. They are to remain under the tutelage of government until the period of their full emancipation; and government is to assign their services, on such terms as it may judge expedient, to those who require them.*

* Rapport, p. 50.